

Youth Leadership

Why Should I Become A Self-Advocate?

A self-advocate is someone who speaks up for themselves. Self-advocates ask for what they need and want, and try to have as much say as possible in making their own life decisions.

Until now, adults have made most of the decisions about your life for you. However, now that you are becoming an adult yourself, you should have a say in what you do, in what you want, and in where you are going. Being able to make your own decisions is important because it allows you to:

- Live as independently as possible
- Do the things you like
- Pursue goals after high school
- Get a job in the career field you want
- Have healthy relationships
- Control your own body and health
- Manage your own money
- Get the services and supports you need

Being a self-advocate is especially important if you have a disability, because you need to:

- Understand your rights in different education settings and the workplace
- Know how and when to ask for accommodations to do your best
- Know how to navigate the community and access the services and supports you need
- Advocate for friends and family members who also have disabilities

Adapted from Youth in Action! Becoming a Stronger Self-Advocate, National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability. Retrieved from <http://www.ncwd-youth.info/tip-sheet/becoming-a-self-advocate>

PARTNERS RESOURCE NETWORK
PRNTexas.org
1.800.866.4726



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